DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 307 232 SP 031 135

TITLE Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher's Handbook.
INSTITUTION Appalachia Educational Lab., Charleston, W. Va.; Tennessee Education Association, Nashville.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Dec 88
NOTE 33p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teachers; *Classroom Techniques; Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Materials; Parent Teacher Cooperation; *Recordkeeping; *Stress Management; Teacher Student Relationship; *Time Management

ABSTRACT

This handbook addresses the concerns and needs of beginning teachers in the sequence in which they often arise. The first two sections offer a checklist of things to attend to before the beginning of school, tips on the physical and visual classroom environment, a supplies checklist, and suggestions ranging from organizing the classroom and making smooth transitions to the plan for the first day teaching. Classroom management is the focus to the next section that includes sample rules for various grade levels and hints for effective time management. The next section offers suggestions on coping with stress, provides guidance for preparation for a substitute teacher, and presents recommendations for effective parent conferences. Policy and procedural information is provided next, followed by information on the development of study groups for assisting educators in conducting/using research. A final section on resources and references includes classroom management and instructional strategy publications as well as additional resources developed for the beginning teachers and their mentors. (JD)

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Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher's Handbook

A Joint Study Conducted By:

TEA

Tennessee Education Association

and

AEL

Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc.
Charleston, West Virginia

December 1988

Funded by the

OERI

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U. S. Department of Education
Washington, D. C.

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This publication is based on work sponsored wholly or in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education, under contact number 400-86-0001. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of OERI, the Department, or any other agency of the U. S. Government.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Members of the TEA-AEL Study Group on Mentor Programs assumed responsibility for the planning, research, and writing of this document. Their commitment to a product of quality and practical value to Tennessee educators was evidenced through each stage of development. Members of the study group are:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning to teach is rarely an easy process, regardless of the personal experiences or teacher education background the new teacher brings to the first position. Nor is yearly induction of a number of new teachers to the rules, procedures, and mores of the school an easy process for colleagues and school administrators. Yet that first year of teaching can mean the beginning of a life of learning, leading, and sharing with students, or it can be a disillusioning hard look at one's chosen career and self-concept. *Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher's Handbook* is designed to help beginning teachers anticipate and cope with the challenges of the first few months of teaching.

The concerns and needs of beginning teachers in the sequence in which they often arise form the framework of the handbook. Beginning with checklists through which the teacher secures information or materials on class schedules, roll and grade books, curriculum guides, supplies, textbooks, etc., the handbook moves from organizing one's classroom for maximum teaching effectiveness and smooth transitions to the plan for the first day of teaching. Classroom management, the greatest survival concern for beginning teachers, is the focus of the next section that includes sample rules for various grade levels and hints for effective time management.

The "Tips for Survival" section offers suggestions on coping with the stress experienced in the first year of teaching, provides guidance for preparations should a substitute teacher be needed, and contains recommendations for effective parent conferences. Finally, the "Resources and References" section can be a source of further assistance. It includes classroom management and instructional strategy publications as well as additional resources developed for the beginning teacher and for those mentoring or assisting them.

Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher's Handbook is not designed to supplant, but to supplement any local, state, or association-developed references for the beginning teacher. The developers, members of a TEA-AEL study group on assistance to beginning teachers, hope that the handbook will be used in conjunction with mentoring programs at the state or local level. Two companion publications developed by the study group may be helpful to those organizing a mentoring program or serving as mentors. *Bridges to Strength: Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers, an Administrator's Guide* can assist in the decision to organize a beginning teacher assistance program. *Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Mentor Teacher Resource Book* offers guidance for educators serving in a mentoring program or interested in assisting those new to the profession. Contact TEA at 615/242-8392 or AEL at 304/347-0400 for information on the availability of these publications.

Let Us Hear From You

Readers are asked to complete the Product Evaluation Form included in this publication and return it to AEL. AEL welcomes any comments regarding the usefulness of *Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher's Handbook* and any suggestions readers may have for other publications.

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WELCOME!

YOU ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN a most important career. You will experience success, frustration, laughter, and tears as you travel a journey that can make a marked difference in the lives of children. As Christa McAuliff said, "We touch the future." How will you feel as you begin?

Overwhelmed—this is probably the most accurate word to describe the experience of beginning teachers. In the first few weeks of the school year all the hope, skill, and talent of an aspiring teacher meet head-on with the needs and expectations of students, parents, and administrators.

It is little wonder that the new teacher feels like a blindfolded juggler trying to keep a crate of oranges in the air!

All the skill and knowledge acquired during teacher training must now be integrated to enhance learning in a real classroom. The most urgent need at this point for most beginning teachers is to sort through this information overload and organize a system to work through the tasks at hand such as room arrangement, supply storage, lesson planning, and setting standards of behavior.

We hope this handbook will make your beginning classroom experiences more successful and enjoyable. Welcome to teaching, the greatest profession in the world!

PURPOSE

RECOGNIZING that organization is the most immediate need of beginning teachers, the TEA-AEL study group developed *Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher's Handbook* of checklists, tips, and resources to help you survive the crucial first month of school, avoiding many common difficulties through prior knowledge and planning. This handbook is intended as a supplement to a state, school system, or association mentoring programs or beginning teacher handbook.

The following sections are organized according to the sequence in which you may need them. "Get Ready, Get Set" presents tasks to be organized and issues to be considered before the students arrive. Consideration is given to such things as room environment, supplies, and sources of information. "Go" offers many helpful suggestions for a successful first day. Some suggestions are quick, to-the-point strategies and others offer a structure for planning curricular activities and student behavior management. "Steady As You Go" offers classroom management techniques related to instructional time, teacher expectations, and student discipline, as well as resources for further information. "Tips for Survival" offers suggestions for handling stress and providing for substitutes in case of absence. "Let's Make Sure" helps you determine whether or not you have all the information you need to begin a successful year. "Study Group Development" outlines the process by which this document was planned, researched, and developed. The final section, "Resources and References," provides a listing of valuable resources for further assistance in classroom management and instructional strategies followed by a bibliography of references used for this handbook.

If every beginning teacher had a well-trained mentor, there would be no need for this handbook. The handbook is not designed to take the place of a mentor or to take the place of the school system handbook we hope every beginning teacher is given. Its purpose is limited: to help beginning teachers get through their crucial first months of school, by providing checklists to assist in organization and by suggesting resources available to any new teacher.

Some of the suggestions in the handbook derive from the experience of the teachers in the study group. Most of them are adapted from a variety of resources that the study group teachers have found to be helpful, especially the following:

New Teacher's Handbook. (1987). Nashville, TN: Metropolitan Nashville Education Association (MNEA),

Orientation Guide for New Teachers. (1987). Memphis, TN: Shelby County Schools, and

Tips for Substitute Survival. Nashville, TN: Tennessee Education Association (TEA) Instruction and Professional Development Commission.

The final test of usefulness of this handbook will be its appearance two or three months after school begins. If this handbook is dog-eared, smudged with chalk, checkmarked, underlined and if it falls open to favorite sections when dropped on the floor, the efforts of the study group will be rewarded.

GET READY, GET SET... Before the First Day of School

Attending to the following preparations as early as practical, or within the week prior to the start of school, should prevent some last minute problems.

Checklist of To-Do's

___ 1. Obtain a tentative schedule and student roster. Write student names and mark attendance on the All Purpose Record Sheet until you are ready to enter this information in the permanent record of attendance book or grade book (see Appendix I).

___ 2. Familiarize yourself with students' names; make name tags, if appropriate for your grade level.

___ 3. Secure textbooks, teacher guides, and curriculum guides.

___ 4. Complete student textbook forms, to the degree possible.

___ 5. Plan the following for the first day:

- a getting-acquainted activity,
- an introduction to classroom policies and grading procedures,
- motivational first-day content activities, and
- an informal preassessment of student abilities.

___ 6. Secure and review the standardized or department-developed tests for the subject/grades you will be teaching.

___ 7. Prepare your classroom to accommodate teacher- and student-centered activities.

___ 8. Meet with a colleague from your grade level or teaching area to determine previous school-home communications. Prepare a memo to students and/or parents outlining expectations regarding the following:

- supplies,
- student conduct,
- textbooks,
- assignments (classwork, homework, special projects),
- progress evaluation, and
- parent-teacher communication.

This checklist is a general listing of items to which any beginning teacher in any school will need to attend. However, each school has a particular pattern of operation derived from characteristics of the community, staff, and physical plant of the school building. For this reason, other teachers in your school are an invaluable resource for information and support. At every opportunity, begin to make connections with other staff members, while cultivating an attitude of friendliness and openness to new ideas. If you are not assigned a mentor, consider asking an experienced colleague, preferably on the same grade level or in the same subject area, to assist you. Your mentor may welcome a copy of *Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Mentor Teacher Resource Book*, available through the Tennessee Education Association or the Appalachia Educational Laboratory. Throughout your first year in teaching or in a new school, remember to ask questions.

An all purpose Record Sheet is included as Appendix I of the handbook for your use until you receive a permanent record book.

Room Environment

After attending to all the immediate tasks of preparing for the beginning of school, it is a good idea to step back and examine the physical and visual aspects of the room environment. Consideration of the following details will help assure that the flow of activity and the attention of the students aare more purposeful with fewer interruptions or distractions.

Physical. A good room arrangement allows students to move about without disturbing each other and enhances learning in student- and teacher-centered activities.

- Be sure students can see you, the chalkboard, and, if used, the projection screen and demonstration areas without having to move seats.
- Be sure you can see students easily from all parts of the room.
- Store books and supplies where they are easily accessible.
- Separate high traffic areas, for instance, teacher's desk, pencil sharpener, and activity centers.

Orient your planning for each lesson to the area where you will conduct large group instruction. If at all possible, have desks face away from possible distractions, like doorways and windows. Sketch a plan of your arrangement, keeping in mind traffic patterns and preserving a clear line of sight between teacher, students, and instructional materials such as audiovisual aids. Consider student seat assignments carefully to further minimize distractions.

If you use learning centers in your classroom, place centers where you can monitor them closely. Make sure all the necessary equipment is available and in working order. For areas of small and large group work, arrange seating so that transitions can be made to accommodate particular activities. It is often a good idea to walk through room arrangements, simulating activities both as a teacher and a student.

Visual. Bulletin boards, maps, models, charts, etc., can serve as sources of motivation, interest, and instruction for students. Areas you may wish to include in the room are:

- wall and shelf space for displaying student work,
- areas for instructionally relevant material,
- classroom rules list, and
- wall or chalkboard space for assignments, messages, etc.

Items may be teacher-made or commercially produced. Take care to make each section teach and to change your displays to reinforce lessons. Consider including bulletin boards students can add to or displays involving lesson extension ideas or "puzzlers" for extra credit to keep students interested in your visuals. While you want an attractive room, do not spend so much time on the decor that you neglect other important tasks necessary to ensure a successful beginning of the year.

With your room completed, now check to see that you have all essential materials and supplies.

Instructional Supplies Checklist

Supplies vary greatly between grades and subjects. Secure those items that are essential to particular lessons well before they are needed. A typical list of classroom supplies includes:

___ manuals/curriculum guides,
___ grade book,
___ attendance book,
___ paper (ditto),
___ paper (note),
___ pens and pencils,
___ grading pencil or pen,
___ chalk,
___ chalkboard erasers,
___ scissors,
___ stapler and staples,
___ paper clips,

___ thumbtacks,
___ cellophane tape,
___ bulletin board fadeless paper,
___ bulletin board edging (optional),
___ construction paper (all colors), and
___ other (make a list of other essentials for your classroom)

Do You Know?

___ Procedure for obtaining supplies

___ Procedure for obtaining textbooks and reference materials

Ask other teachers to describe what the school provides and what you must furnish yourself. They should also be able to explain procedures and forms needed to get supplies.

You might walk through several other classrooms and list materials you would like in your own room. Next, think about storage. Things that will be used often—textbooks, for example—should be on book shelves or in easily accessible areas. Things for occasional use may be stored in closets or on top of cabinets. Store materials in convenient places, but be sure they are not distracting to students.

GO!
Tips for Day One

Jitters are expected on your first day of teaching. The following suggestions may help you create a business-like atmosphere beginning with Day One.

- Be flexible, positive, and assured. Be in control.
- Learn students' names. Recheck the spellings and pronunciations with students. Call students by name often. Provide name tags for lower primary students. Help students become acquainted. Be certain students know and use your name.
- Outline your expectations of conduct in the classroom, in the hall, and on the playground or campus. Be sure students know that you expect them to behave appropriately. For elementary students, reinforce appropriate behaviors you observe.
- Discuss your work standards, homework, and grading policies.
- Review lunch, recess, and other operating schedules if appropriate. To the extent possible, describe the routines that elementary children will follow.
- Issue textbooks (if applicable) and complete textbook forms. (Assigning a seatwork activity to be completed while texts are issued can reduce off-task behavior.)
- Begin individual or group assessment and review of reading and math skills or other subject areas.
- Give a specific first-day writing and discussion assignment (if appropriate) such as:

  "The best thing I did during the summer...."

  "When I think of school, I think of...."

  "This year I hope...."
- Send home memos you and/or the school administrator have written to parents.
- Believe that your students want to do the right thing.
- Review class activities and assignments (if appropriate), and end the day in a positive manner.

Let's Begin: Further Hints for a Successful First Day

A good way to start the first day is to stand near the door and greet students as they enter. If a student enters in an unacceptable manner, stop the student, explain to him or her the behavior you expect, and ask the student to

repeat the entrance appropriately. After all students are seated, begin with a brief introduction of yourself—your hobbies, your family, etc., followed by a short activity in which students can get acquainted.

When everyone has settled down and has had the opportunity to speak, give an overview of topics and activities the students can look forward to for the year. Follow this with a discussion of classroom rules. Your school may have a handbook of rules and policies. Below are examples of behavior rules that teachers have found successful at various grade levels (Canter, L. & Canter, M., 1976). Remember, these are examples, and you will need to tailor a set of rules to your classroom. A set of five to eight rules should be enough to cover the most important areas of behavior.

Sample Class Rules

Primary: Kindergarten-3rd Grades

A. 1. Follow directions.
2. Only walking is allowed in the classroom.
3. Raise your hand and wait to be called on unless given permission to do otherwise.
4. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
5. Return materials to their proper storage place when you are finished with them.

B. 1. Follow directions given by all teachers and parent helpers.
2. Be seated quietly in the listening center when the bell rings.
3. When directed to change centers, do so without talking.
4. Leave playground balls outside the classroom.
5. Get permission to bring toys and playthings to class.

C. 1. Follow directions.
2. One person may talk at a time. No disruptions are allowed.
3. Have pencils and paper at your desk, ready for work.
4. Speak kindly to one another.
5. Scissors, paint, and other art supplies may be used in the art corner only, unless permission is given.

Upper Elementary: 4th-6th Grades

A. 1. Follow directions.
2. Be in your seat when the bell rings.
3. Have all appropriate materials and supplies at your desk, ready to begin work when the bell rings.
4. Permission and a pass must be granted before leaving the classroom.
5. Keep your hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.

B. 1. Follow directions.
2. No swearing, teasing, or obscene gestures are allowed at any time.
3. Put away all materials and wait to be excused by the teacher before leaving for recess.
4. Sitting on the desk tops or counters is not allowed.
5. You must be in your seat with pencils, paper, and reading material ready when the bell rings.

C. 1. Follow directions.
2. In classroom discussions, raise your hand and wait to be called on.
3. Remain in your seat unless given permission to do otherwise.
4. Complete all assignments and have them checked by the teacher before going to the "free time" center.
5. Have all homework assignments, books, and writing materials at your desk, ready to begin work when the bell rings.

Secondary: 7th-12th Grades

A. 1. Follow directions.
2. Remain silent when announcements are being read by the instructor or over the loudspeaker.
3. No food, candy, or gum shall be eaten during class.
4. Come to class with all your materials.
5. Be seated, ready to work when the tardy bell rings.

B. 1. Follow directions.
2. Swearing or obscene gestures are not allowed.
3. Get a proper hall pass before leaving the classroom.
4. Check out all lab materials before use

and return them by the end of the period.
5. Be in your assigned seat with all necessary materials when the tardy bell rings.

C. 1. Follow directions.
2. Follow all appropriate safety rules and directions when using classroom equipment.
3. Wear safety glasses when operating equipment.
4. Clean all stations before dismissal from class.
5. No equipment, tools, or projects may be removed from class without the instructor's permission.

D. 1. Follow directions.
2. Avoid interruptions or personal remarks during open classroom discussion.
3. Avoid side-talk during lectures or group discussions.
4. Be in your seat and prepared with the proper materials when the tardy bell rings.
5. Turn in all homework assignments before class begins.

Share *your* list with the students, explaining each rule carefully as it is introduced. Keep your list concise, clear, and POST IT! This will help to reinforce the importance of the class rules. Discuss the consequences of violating school or class rules with students. Reinforce rules consistently and fairly for all students. If a problem develops which is not covered by a rule, use the opportunity to discuss an appropriate rule and consequences with students. Remember, losing your temper or criticizing students makes you appear to be out of control. State the inappropriate behavior and consequence, avoid generalizing from behavior to the student.

More First Day Do's

- Your beginning activity should be one students can complete with success and with little or no help.
- Teach whole-class and seatwork procedures immediately.
- Remember, since this is a new situation for the students also, repeat rules, procedures, and consequences.
- Set a pleasant, positive tone to the end of the day, and students will look forward to returning to class. Let them know you are looking forward to an enjoyable year.
- PLAN! PLAN! PLAN!

The first day, second day, and the first week of school set the tone for the entire year. By knowing what you are going to teach and by having the materials you need, you will be prepared for a successful beginning and feel more confident.

Students will try to see if you really are going to make them follow the rules. BE CONSISTENT in holding students to your expectations. Ignore misbehaviors that do not interrupt the lesson or interfere with others.

Remember that many of the things happening in your classroom during the first few weeks are happening also to *all* teachers. Many things are "first few weeks" problems that have to be solved every year with each new class (Wildman, 1985). Meet each problem and solve it as quickly as you can. It is not the severity of punishment but the certainty of it that deters unacceptable behavior. Again, talk to experienced teachers who have gone through the beginning of school "blitz." Some problems can be averted or eased simply through conversation.

Ask! Ask! Ask!

After your long-anticipated and well-planned first day of teaching, you and your students will have learned a great deal about one another. Some mutual expectations will have been established in terms of behavior, procedure, and attitude that will direct the course of learning throughout the year. Naturally, those expectations will be refined and amended as the need arises. The following section deals with concerns of classroom management that may help you avoid unexpected disruptions of the learning process within your classroom. Suggestions for restoring order are offered for those inevitable occasions when the classroom routine is disrupted.

STEADY AS YOU GO: Classroom Management

FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION, an orderly businesslike environment is necessary. There are no magic formulas for good classroom management. There is no ONE best way to teach. Don't lose heart. Many of the problems of classroom management can be solved by planning—even by a beginner. Management, however, begins with you.

Time Management

The following hints for time management may help you begin to lay a good foundation:

- Decide early in the year which routine activities can be student responsibilities and which you will do yourself.
- Have a "to-do" list for each day, and check off items as they are completed.
- Develop a "Swiss cheese" approach to tasks. With a big task, do a little bit at a time. This discourages procrastination.
- Get in the habit of planning at the same time each day or night.
- With each sheet of paper on your desk, do one of the following:

  A. ACT on it.
  B. GIVE it to someone else for action.
  C. FILE it in a proper place.
  D. TOSS it away.

- Use a loose-leaf notebook for lesson plans, so pages can be added easily.
- Use a monthly calendar for unit planning (see Appendix II).
- Let your students know what general topics will be covered each six weeks, or provide weekly or unit outlines or assignment sheets.
- Check attendance by seating chart instead of by roll call.
- Invest in a set of folders, and add class or unit labels. Learn to file papers after grading instead of stacking them on the corner of your desk. Students can learn to file their papers for your later attention or to share later with parents.
- Ask questions of other teachers. They may have a variety of solutions.

- Organize your classroom and desk to allow you to work efficiently. This sets an example for your students, too.
- Learn to say NO!
- When in a panic for time, ask yourself, "Would anything really terrible happen if I didn't do this?" If the answer is no, don't do it (Metropolitan Nashville Education Association, 1987).

Expectations

A second factor in good management is expectations. While having high expectations for your teaching and student learning will not guarantee success, research suggests that expectations tend to be self-fulfilling. If the teacher thinks she or he is capable and the students think they are capable, then these attitudes become the norm (Wildman, 1985). The following are some basic teacher expectations:

- A teacher's main responsibility is to teach.
- A teacher should enjoy teaching.
- A teacher must understand the crucial aspects of teaching.
- A teacher should expect that all students meet minimum objectives.
- A teacher should expect to teach individuals, not groups.
- A teacher should assume good intentions and positive self-concepts from students.
- A teacher should expect to be obeyed.
- A teacher should have realistic expectations of students' behavior and performance.
- A teacher should like children.
- A teacher should expect to experience some difficulty (Good & Brophy, 1984).

Student Behavior Management

Effective discipline or student behavior management is probably the area about which you will be most concerned. Again, there are no hard and fast rules that apply to each and every classroom. Classes have "personalities," and what you do will be guided by that "personality" and by your own.

There are several things that may help facilitate and maintain classroom control. Begin by having "eyes in the back of your head." In other words, know what's going on in your classroom. If off-task behaviors occur, use mild corrections before the behaviors become serious. Compliment students for acceptable behavior, and remember to TEACH STUDENTS WHAT TO DO. Try to anticipate potential problems with activities or transitions, and prevent or warn against misbehaviors.

Transition, or getting from one activity to another while maintaining a businesslike atmosphere, is very important. Stating and clarifying transition instructions can help. This takes practice. Good management requires hard work, and LEARNING TO TEACH TAKES TIME.

A third trick of the trade is to wait until you have a break to respond to tardy slips, parental notes, and/or paperwork that can be delayed. Your during-class responsibilities are your students.

A fourth suggestion is to keep students as involved as possible but to expect some problems. You can use alerting cues (standing by the student, putting a hand on the student's shoulder, giving a "teacher" look) to let students know that you may call on them or that their off-task behavior should stop.

Finally, when students know they will be held accountable, their involvement in work increases (Wildman, 1985). Call on each student as often as possible. Collect, grade, and review assigned work, tests, and quizzes.

What if some students fail to respond to classroom conduct expectations? Other methods of student behavior management will be necessary. This list suggests a sequence of steps you may wish to consider.

- Change the student's seat.

- Hold a private conference with the student.
- Deny privileges.
- Telephone the parent(s) or have a parent conference.
- Seat the student away from other students.
- Establish a contract with the student which contains rewards, contingent on acceptable behavior.
- Consult the counselor and/or other teachers.
- Refer the student to the guidance counselor.
- As a last resort, after you have tried all of the preceding steps, refer the student to the principal. For extremely disruptive behavior, such as fighting, immediate referral is warranted (Shelby County Schools, 1987).

As a beginning teacher or teacher new to the school, you may wish to ask for an appointment with the principal before problems arise, to discuss your proposed classroom management techniques and to enlist his or her input and support. At this time you can learn his or her philosophy and expectations.

TIPS FOR SURVIVAL

Handling Stress

OCCASIONALLY there will be days when you will feel as if you had been hit by a Mack truck. This stress can make you cry, make you angry, or even make you want to walk out of class and not return. Before you do anything so drastic, read "The Therapeutic Thirteen," which suggest positive ways to handle stress.

The Therapeutic Thirteen (Positive Ways to Handle Stress)

1. **Escape for a period.** When stress begins to mount, escape from it either mentally or physically. This can be done by changing your thought pattern or by leaving your work and going for a short walk. It is ineffective to work when tired. Learn to relax. Use humor.
2. **Develop release activities.** Use crossword puzzles, exercises, hobbies, and other interests. Indulge yourself.
3. **Find an individual or support group** that you can talk to about your concerns. Consider organizing other beginning teachers in your school or district or joining an existing group within your grade, department, or school.
4. **Try to keep an uncluttered desk.** (A cluttered desk is usually perceived as disorganized and stressful.)
5. **Examine your diet.** Does it provide for your nutritional needs? Does it include medication? Whatever you do, do not self-medicate.
6. **Establish a life balance.** Aim for 8 hours of work, 4 hours for family, and 4 hours for self. Make a schedule and stick to it. Leave home problems at home and work problems at work. While school work may occupy some hours at home, try to deal with problems as soon as possible after they occur during the day.
7. **Take things one at a time.** Make a "To Do" list. Zero in on one area and try to improve it rather than trying to overhaul your life completely at one time.
8. **Don't try to be "Superteacher."** Establish priorities and put your emphasis on quality, not quantity. Remember the 80-20 principle: 80% of the value may come from the first 20% of work time, or 80% of the value may come from 20% of the items on your "To Do" list. Remember, all of your students' problems are not yours; help or refer to help when you can and don't worry for them.

9. **Delegate responsibility whenever possible.**

10. **Hone your professional skills.** Go back to school. Being a student is a good role reversal technique that gives you the student's perspective. Read current literature, or seek advice or suggestions from those you consider to be "good teachers."

11. **Learn to be a professional.** Support your colleagues and principal. Do not speak unkindly of them. Be prepared in your teaching. Involve your students in the instructional process. Participate in your professional organizations. Use protocol in trying to resolve problems, or use the "chain of command" approach. Respect your students as individuals.

12. **Know thy self.** Become aware of what situations cause stress for you. Then either avoid these circumstances or desensitize yourself to them. This might require that you learn to compromise. You do not always have to be right.

13. **Use the self-renewal, "Food for Thought" Idea.** Grant me the courage to change the things I can change, the patience to accept the things I cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference (adapted from Shelby County Education Association, 1981-82).

Good luck! Plan, ask questions, and keep trying. Remember, one day *you* will be the "experienced teacher," in fact, by this time next year.

Substitute Teacher Provisions

There may be a time when you will have to be absent. In order not to worry about a "lost" day, provide your substitute with adequate lesson plans and materials.

The following information can best be utilized by a substitute if organized in a clear, concise manner in a specially labeled "Substitute Notebook" or "Substitute Folder" and placed where it is readily available.

1. Schedule of classes
   - A. Regular classes
   - B. Special classes—day and time
     1. Music
     2. Art
     3. Physical Education
     4. Library
   - C. Alternate plan in case of cancellation of special classes
2. Names and schedules of students who leave the classroom for special reasons (e.g., medication, resource, speech, etc.)
3. Class roll, including seating chart
4. Opening activities
   - A. Absentee report
   - B. Procedures for reporting free, reduced price, and paid lunches, etc.
5. Lesson plans for day(s), including specific instructions and procedures for each activity, such as moving from one lesson to another, rest room, etc.
6. Classroom rules and discipline procedures (special problems should be noted)
7. Location of all manuals and other materials to be used
8. Location of extra work for students
9. Procedures for use of audiovisual materials
10. Names and schedules of aides and/or volunteers
11. Name(s) of pupils who can be depended upon to help with routine classwork or errands to the office or other classrooms
12. Name and location of a teacher to call upon for assistance
13. Procedures for sick or injured children
14. Procedures for early and regular dismissal

15. Floor plan of building
16. Procedures for emergency drills (fire, tornado, etc.)
17. Names of faculty and staff
18. Floor plan or map of classroom

If possible, let students know what they should accomplish while you are away.

Help to set the tone for a positive day by writing a brief note of greeting to the substitute, thanking him or her for filling in and extending best wishes for a good day (Tennessee Education Association Instruction and Professional Development Commission).

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Your first parent-teacher conference may occur before you are feeling really settled and confident of your teaching. Individual conferences with a host of parents or guardians intent on the progress of their children can be added stress to your busy schedule, but remember that parents generally are very thoughtful and cooperative with teachers. The following suggestions for preparation may help you confidently approach the conferences and conduct them productively.

Remember that the sole purpose of a conference is to allow the parent and teacher to understand more fully the student's performance in school and ways to enhance that performance. Communicate this purpose to parents. Keeping this in mind keeps the focus of discussion efficient and productive and discourages extraneous issues.

Whether a conference is requested through your phone call or letter or part of a schoolwide night of conferences, a note to parents suggesting issues to think about before meeting can be helpful in making the conference productive and setting the tone for *mutual* information sharing and problem-solving. List some possible questions the parents may want to ask, such as:

- What are my child's areas of strength and weakness?
- Is my child involved in any special instruction?
- What mathematics group is my child in?
- What reading group is my child in?
- What method is used to evaluate or grade school work?
- What is the teacher's policy on homework?
- Are there any special problems relating to discipline or socialization?
- What can I do at home to help my child to improve in a difficult subject?
- How well does my child communicate?
- Is my child motivated?
- What are the learning objectives for each subject during the current report card period?
- What specific suggestions for improvement does the teacher have for my child? (Norcel & Tobin, 1988, p. 40)

Also, encourage the parents to discuss the planned conference with the child, asking if there is anything the child would like the parent to see or to discuss. If one parent is unable to attend, explain that a list of questions from the absent parent is welcome, and that the attending parent is free to take notes. Point out that it is a good idea for parents to confer with the child after the meeting, relating to the student any appropriate information learned in the conference and reinforcing the idea that the teacher and parents are working together in the child's interest.

In preparing for the conferences, gather any information pertinent to the student's performance: grades, sample work, standardized test scores, attendance reports, and other pertinent data. It is also wise to have on hand information about rules and procedures that parents have

received prior to the conference. Be prepared to discuss each child in terms of:

- ability to do school work,
- grade levels in reading and math,
- special interests and abilities,
- relationships with other children,
- level of self-esteem, and
- behavior in and out of class (Norcel & Tobin, 1988, p. 40).

As the conference begins, greet the parents in a warm and friendly manner so they will be comfortable in asking questions and sharing in the discussion. As you talk with parents, keep in mind these four principles:

1. Speak in everyday language. Avoid the use of educational jargon that tends to confuse the message and to distance the parents from the purpose of the conference. When you must use technical terms, explain them with concrete examples. For instance, if the student is learning "regrouping" in math, mention that it is also called "carrying" and demonstrate a simple problem, if necessary.
2. When describing student behaviors, describe the circumstances and conditions surrounding the behavior. This allows the parents to understand their child's behavior in context of the situation when it occurs.
3. Throughout the conference, invite questions and comments from the parents, responding with positive comments about their contributions. Communicate your understanding of any difficulties they are experiencing with the child, yet maintain a focus of student performance.
4. Avoid emotionally charged words that alarm parents and prevent them from objectively exploring their child's progress. Labels such as "hyperactive" or "immature" are detrimental to parent-teacher communication, as are polarizing words such as "humanism" and "permissive" (Lawrence & Hunter, 1978).

As you begin to conclude the conference, summarize important topics of discussion, checking with parents for mutual understanding of important issues and plans of action. As the parents prepare to leave, encourage them to get in touch with you later if they wish. Convey your appreciation for their interest and involvement in their child's schooling.

Write a brief anecdotal record on the conference for future reference.

LET'S MAKE SURE

CHECK TO see what you have and what you still need. At some point, you will need to have the following information:

School/District Policy Information

___ Materials the school/district furnishes

___ Policy for setting up the room (i.e., whether it is permissible to put staples in the wall)

___ Teacher evaluation procedures

___ Discipline policy

___ Behavior documentation (if needed), misconduct form, etc.

___ Personnel policies concerning sick or professional leave days

___ Field trip forms

___ Student cumulative records

___ Assistance to handicapped and/or special education students

___ Procedures for referral of students for testing and teacher responsibilities in placement meetings

___ Achievement test(s)

  ___ Copies of test(s)

  ___ Directions for scoring and interpretation

School/District Procedural Information

___ Lesson plans

___ Unit plans

___ Grading procedures

  ___ For grade book

  ___ For report card

___ Student attendance

___ Daily schedule

___ How to take class to lunch, library, etc.

REMEMBER, IF YOU DON'T KNOW, ASK!
OTHER TEACHERS WILL REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE A BEGINNER.

STUDY GROUP DEVELOPMENT

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) seeks to provide professional development opportunities to educators by working with and through their associations. Since 1985, the Classroom Instruction (CI) program has assisted associations through the creation of study groups. AEL's purpose for a study group is to assist educators in conducting and/or using research.

A study group is composed of educators who are organized to conduct a study of an educational issue. The study group generally produces a product that is useful to other educators. Associations and AEL jointly select topics for study groups, although the selection of members is handled by the association. AEL staff participate in meetings as members of the study group and usually take a facilitative role. AEL provides a small grant to the association to assist with the group's costs, but the association or individual members generally make in-kind contributions that far exceed AEL's grant. AEL provides additional services, such as editing, layout, and typesetting of the group's final product. The responsibility for dissemination lies with both AEL and the association. Usually, AEL provides dissemination to the other three states in its Region while the association disseminates the study in its own state.

Planning the Study

A February 1988 meeting between Katie Stanton Harris, president of TEA; Gloria Dailey, instruction and professional development (IPD) coordinator of TEA; and Jane Hange, director of the AEL Classroom Instruction (CI) program resulted in the formation of the TEA-AEL study group on assistance to beginning teachers. The association staff nominated members of TEA's IPD internship and teacher education subcommittee for study group participation. Members of the group were already deeply involved in the issue of beginning teacher induction and had particular interest in teacher mentoring programs.

At its initial meeting in April 1988, the group decided to focus on the issue of teacher mentoring programs as a key component of assistance to beginning teachers. While they decided to conduct informal surveys of teachers in their own systems about new teachers' needs for assistance and support, their primary product, they decided, would be "how to" guides for new teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators in school systems instituting mentoring programs. Recommendations of a state board of education committee on which one study group member sat influenced the direction of the study group. In November 1988, Tennessee State Board of Education action established an induction program for new teachers in Tennessee, including provisions for mentoring all categories of new teachers. Study group members saw that "how to" guides could soon be needed in many Tennessee school systems.

This handbook is one of a series of guides produced by the study group. In addition to this handbook, intended for use by beginning teachers, the series includes the following titles: *Bridges to Strength: Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers, an Administrator's Guide* and *Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Mentor Teacher Resource Book.*

Conducting the Study

The study group decided to rely primarily on a review of the literature on teacher mentoring, in order to use experience developed in other parts of the country to inform Tennessee school systems of the most useful program features. In addition, they decided to poll mentor and beginning teachers in their own school districts informally, to identify the areas in which beginning teachers need help, the role of the mentor teacher, benefits of the mentor/protégé relationship, and how this relationship could be im-

proved. While their surveys were informal, the three study group members who polled their colleagues or students reported very similar findings, verifying the utility of the group's products for Tennessee teachers. In addition to these activities, the group requested the president of the Tennessee Education Association (TEA) to send a letter to all local association presidents requesting copies of any materials they might have developed on mentoring. One response was received, from the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association (MNEA). Results of all these informal surveys are discussed at more length in "Tips for Survival," located in this document.

The study group compiled a large amount of material on mentoring, in part from the Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee state departments of education and from AEL resources, in part from a nationwide literature search. The group looked over and discussed these materials as a whole group, then planned the various publications, chose topics on which to write, and took copies of the literature that pertained to their individual topics to study more carefully and incorporate into their writing. Each study group member took responsibility for developing discrete sections of the products. The entire product (three publications) was edited by all study group members and the TEA president and IPD coordinator before receiving a final edit from AEL staff writers. AEL staff were responsible for layout and typesetting of the documents. TEA received a camera-ready copy of the document so that the association can disseminate this study in Tennessee while AEL publishes and distributes the publication at cost in Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

AS YOU OVERCOME the "forest" of initial trials of teaching, you will begin to focus on particular "trees" of interest, either in classroom management or instructional strategies, that apply to specific situations in your classroom. The following resources are listed to assist you in discovering alternative strategies for managing those situations as you become more skilled in your profession. The listings are not all-inclusive; they may provide the specific information you need, or they may provide a good base of departure in your search. The final listing is a bibliography of references used in the development of this handbook.

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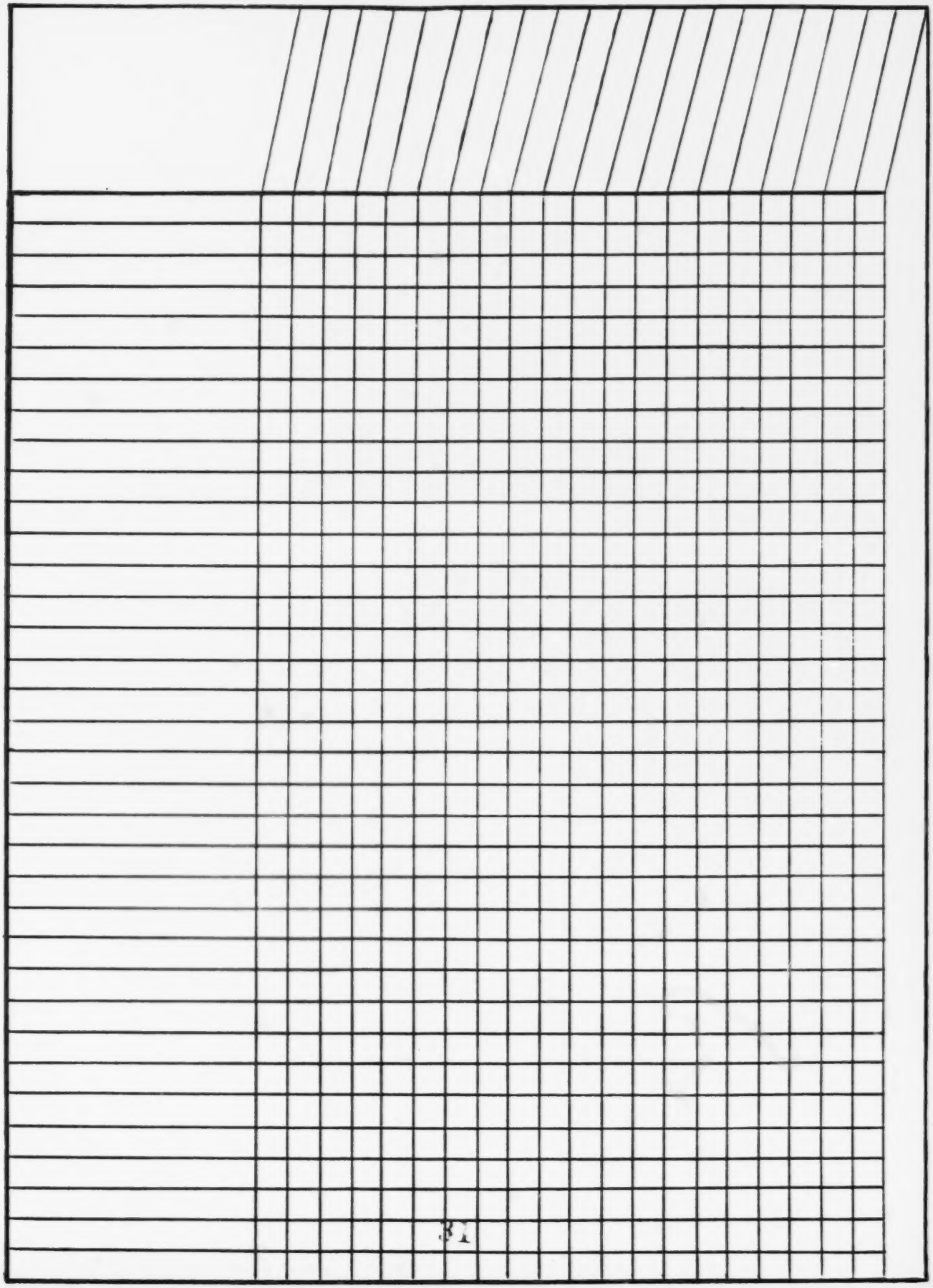
APPENDIX I

All Purpose Record Sheet

(reprinted with permission from Orientation Guide for New Teachers, Shelby County Schools, Memphis, TN, 1987)

ALL PURPOSE RECORD SHEET



APPENDIX II

Sample Monthly Calendar

(reprinted with permission from New Teacher's Handbook, Metropolitan Nashville Education Association, Nashville, TN, August 1987)

SAMPLE MONTHLY CALENDAR TO IMPROVE TIME MANAGEMENT

Month _____

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
___	___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___	___